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It has been almost 7 years since the last water resource bill was authorized, stalling progress on local environmental projects, so I am beyond pleased to see the House take up this important bill today.

After passing WRRDA, we need to continue to pressure for the chief support for the Central Everglades Planning Project so that these important projects can move forward as well. In the current no-spending climate in Congress, it is difficult to fight for funding for these critical projects to address the pollution impacting our local waterways, but there is a difference between smart investments and wasteful spending, which is something I have been working hard to tackle these past 10 months.

Infrastructure and environmental projects are not only crucial to improve the health of our waterways but to provide a 3 to 1 return on investment. Furthermore, funding for Everglades projects is equally matched by the State so they, too, have skin in the game, highlighting the importance of cooperation across all levels of government to work towards real solutions to address the challenges facing our waterways.

Mr. Speaker, these issues are simply too important to ignore. That is why I am here today with this bottle of polluted water behind me to show the severity of this ongoing crisis. I remain focused on this issue of great concern to our community, our environment, our economy, and our entire way of life. No one person can make all these things happen. It takes advocacy and action at all levels of government. To that end, I will include a summary of this briefing to be entered into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to educate all Members of Congress on this important issue and the role we all play in addressing it.

OBAMACARE EXCHANGES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. ELLMERS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ELLMERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the failures taking place with the launch of the ObamaCare exchange through healthcare.gov. Since October 1, this Web site has been plagued with delays, errors, and fundamental flaws in the Web site design. This prompted USA Today to call it an "inexcusable mess" and "nightmare." In addition to the technological failure, the Web site leaves Americans open to exposure of privacy information. Buried in the source code of healthcare.gov, a paragraph reads:

You have no reasonable expectation of privacy regarding any data stored on this information system. At any time, the government may monitor, intercept, search, and seize any data stored on this information system. Any data stored on this information system

may be disclosed or used for any lawful government purpose.

Consumer Reports states:

It's not worth the hassle, at least not for now. Stay away from healthcare.gov for at least another month if you can.

This is not reassuring for Americans entering personal, medical, and financial information onto a government Web site, especially when Congress is still reviewing the IRS for gross mismanagement in collecting private individual information.

John McAfee, founder of McAfee Antivirus, emphasized last Wednesday:

Millions of Americans could have their identities stolen as a result of signing up for ObamaCare.

Despite these major malfunctions and structural defects, the administration still has penalties in place for individuals that don't obtain coverage.

Mr. Speaker, this is not acceptable.

Prior to October 1, my colleagues and I emphasized the inability of the Department of Health and Human Services to implement these exchanges. Therefore, if an individual does not wish to subject themselves to the risk of identity theft, they should be allowed to make that decision without the consequence of fines forced by the Federal Government. That is why I am working on legislation right now to ensure that Americans are not being punished for failing to buy a health care plan from a dysfunctional system.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the Associated Press reported that, to date, only 476,000 people have enrolled. Mind you, that is 476,000 Americans that are left open to identity theft. I would like to point out that this is out of 36 States enrolled in the Federally-Facilitated Marketplace—36 States. At one point, healthcare.gov posted error messages in at least 24 of those 36 States.

Further, according to the USASpending.gov, over \$600 million of taxpayer dollars have been spent setting up these failed exchanges. Mr. Speaker, this is an insult to the American taxpayers.

CGI Group, one of the main contractors for healthcare.gov, reported that the site's design was changed about a month before its debut to prevent users from comparing prices without registering for an account. Why would the administration agree to remove the price comparison option when the President has promised the country affordable health care? It is because, for some, health care rates may become simply unaffordable.

The administration announced they would provide a new "shop and browse" feature to the Web site. However, this new feature is not giving consumers the real price. In some cases, people could end up paying double what they see on the Web site. For example, CBS News ran the numbers for a 48-year-old woman in Charlotte, North Carolina, who is ineligible for subsidies. According to healthcare.gov, she would pay \$231 a month, but the actual plan on the Blue Cross and Blue Shield North

Carolina Web site costs \$360 a month. This is more than a 50 percent increase. The difference: Blue Cross and Blue Shield requests your birth date before providing more accurate estimates, further proving the point that monopolies are problematic as well, especially in North Carolina.

Hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars are being spent on a system that does not work. Therefore, there is one question we must all ask ourselves: Is the Affordable Care Act really affordable?

CONSEQUENCES OF GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important before we move into the weeks ahead that we take a minute and ask ourselves what happened last week during the shutdown? What were the consequences of the shutdown? What did the shutdown mean to Americans? It is important to pause and ask, What really happened? Because as the days roll by, people are going to just move on to the next thing.

Let's be clear: this irresponsible shutdown cost the economy \$24 billion in lost economic output, or about 0.6 percent of annualized growth, according to Standard & Poor's. That is \$24 billion of people not making purchases that they had planned to because they thought they had better hold on to their money because they didn't know what was going to happen. That is \$24 billion of businesses that did business with people who were Federal employees who didn't have their check or didn't know if they were going to have it.

I mean, the untold damage that the Republican majority in the House did to this economy is a shameful thing, and they did it for one reason and one reason only: to deny millions of Americans affordable health care. Now, I think that it is important to mark this moment and to be very clear about what happened and the losses we incurred. This economy lost 120,000 jobs, according to the Council of Economic Advisers; 120,000 jobs because of lower demand, because of a number of things. A number of people were losing their livelihood because of the shutdown, again, because the majority in the House sees fit to deny millions of Americans affordable health care.

Now, in the days to come now that the shutdown is over, there is no question they will try to amp up and build up the bugs in the computer system, but thousands of people are getting health care and signing up right now. The news is actually good, and there has never been a system that is new that didn't have problems. In fact, my friends on the Republican side of the aisle, I invite them to go back to Medicare part D, the prescription drug benefit in which they said that Big